



University honors Maria Minna, M.P.

Beaches-East York Member of Parliament Maria Minna has been selected as one of the top 40 most accomplished graduates of the University of Toronto's Mississauga campus.

Ms. Minna was the only politician to be named among the top 40 graduates since the University's Mississauga campus opened in 1967.

She received her award on May 30, 2008, at a special ceremony officiated over by former Ontario Premier Bill Davis.

"It's a real honor," she said. "There were some very accomplished people on that list."

Maria Minna was born in Pofi, Italy, on March 14, 1948, and immigrated to Canada at the age of nine. She grew up with her family in Toronto and took a job at an early age to assist in paying off the family mortgage and to provide for her younger sisters' education

She enrolled at the University of Toronto in 1973 as a mature student and paid all of her own expenses during the four years she was at the university. She

graduated with an Honours BA in Sociology and had her loan paid back in less than 2 years.

At the special awards ceremony on May 30th, mention was made of the fact that she quickly became a well-known advocate speaking out on behalf of immigrant and visible minority Canadians, women and youth. From 1981 until 1992, she served as volunteer president of COSTI Immigrant Services, Canada's largest immigrant services organization.

She also served as a director of the National Council on Welfare and as a member of the United Way Campaign Committee, the Women's Legal Education Action Fund, the National Action Committee on Immigrant and Visible Minority Women, and president of the National Congress of Italian-Canadians.

A public policy consultant by profession, Maria Minna was appointed Co-Chair of the Worker's Compensation Board of Ontario's Task Force on Vocational Rehabilitation in 1986. She held public hearings across Ontario and delivered a hard-hitting report that resulted in significant improvements to the manner in which injured workers were treated.

In 1991, she was appointed Chair of the WCB Task Force on Service Delivery. She interviewed senior management and front-line personnel across Ontario and delivered a report that resulted in significant improvements in the delivery of services to WCB clients and the elimination of waste.

As Vice-President of MacBain Public Affairs Inc., she provided counsel and service to clients in manufacturing and financial services.

First elected to Parliament in October 1993, Maria Minna was appointed Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development in 1994 and served as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration from 1996 to 1998.

She is widely recognized as one of the most progressive members of the national Liberal caucus. She fought hard to maintain Canada's social safety net and universal health care system. She also fought for the National Child Tax Benefit to reduce child poverty and for programs to support early childhood development. She served as Chair of the Social Policy Committee of the National Liberal Caucus for several years.

She spoke out strongly against the American attack on Iraq and the Ballistic Missile Defence program.

As Minister of International Co-operation from August 1999, until January 2002, she was in charge of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) - the agency responsible for Canada's more than \$3 billion annual

commitment to improving living conditions in developing countries across the globe.

She doubled Canada's overseas investment in health and nutrition and quadrupled investments in education, HIV/AIDS prevention and child protection. She ensured that gender equality and human rights formed an integral part of all of those priority areas. She also ensured that all CIDA projects adhered to high environmental standards.

She represented Canada with distinction at meetings of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Organization of American States, Global Coalition of African States, and the United Nations. Under her leadership, Canada hosted the International Conference on HIV/AIDS and the International Conference on War-Affected Children.

Maria Minna is the Liberal critic for the Status of Women. She also chairs the Canada-Bangladesh Parliamentary Friendship Group and the Canada-Sri Lanka Parliamentary Friendship Group.